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RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 001183

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [SNAR](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: GOE REQUESTS MEETING TO COORDINATE HANDOVER OF
MANTA FOL

Classified By: DCM Andrew Chritton for Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

¶1. (SBU) The Ambassador received an official memorandum from the Minister of Defense, Javier Ponce, on December 23 asking to meet with Embassy officials on January 14, 2009. The stated purpose of the meeting is to review terms of the Manta Forward Operating Location (FOL) agreement and to establish a timeline for the USG's withdrawal from the FOL. Officials from the Defense Ministry, Ecuadorian Air Force (FAE) and Foreign Ministry will attend.

¶2. (C) Embassy Quito considers the request positive. It presents an opportunity to coordinate with the GOE a workable timeline for departure of the USG from the Manta FOL. It is important, for example, that the GOE be made fully aware as soon as possible of when it will need to assume firefighting responsibilities and utility costs for the Manta airport.

¶3. (C) This meeting request from the Defense Minister would necessitate one change in the timeline the Embassy proposed in reftel, moving the receipt of the finalized transfer timeline from DOD up from January 15 to January 12.

¶4. (U) The following is an informal translation of the Defense Minister's December 23 official memorandum:

Begin Text of Memorandum

Ms. Heather Hodges
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES

Subject: Meeting on Handover of the Manta FOL to the
Ecuadorian Air Force (FAE)

Dear Madam,

On July 28 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce, and Integration, officially informed the Embassy of the United States of America of the National Government's decision to terminate the agreement signed on November 12, 1999, regarding the "Access to and Use of Installations at the Ecuadorian Air Force Base in Manta for Aerial Counter-Narcotics Activities."

In that same official notification, and on the basis of conversations and understandings reached between representatives of both countries, it is noted that the operations of the Forwarding Operating Location in the Manta Base will be suspended from the month of August 2009, and that the Forwarding Operating Location (FOL) will be permanently withdrawn in the month of November of that same year.

With the purpose of making the termination of the referenced agreement official, defining and finalizing a schedule to hand over the Manta FOL's facilities to the FAE is in order.

For this reason, I would appreciate if you, Madam Ambassador, would appoint delegate(s) from the Embassy of the United States in Ecuador to attend a meeting at the Ministry of National Defense Cabinet meeting hall on Wednesday, January 14, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. The above referenced meeting will include the participation of delegates from the Ministry of National Defense, FAE Colonels Eduardo Cardenas and Mauricio Campuzano, and a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The agenda for discussion is:

11. Introduction (Dr. Fredy Rivera)
12. Antecedents and terms of the agreement (presented by the FAE)
13. Working meeting to define a schedule.

Sincerely,

GOD, FATHERLAND, AND LIBERTY

Javier Ponce Cevallos
Minister of National Defense

End Text of Memorandum
HODGES